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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/06/2016
TAGS: [GR](#) [PHSA](#)
SUBJECT: GREEK RESPONSE TO DECEMBER 7TH UNGA OCEANS DEBATE

REF: STATE 195607

Classified By: Counselor for Economic Affairs Clark Price for
Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

11. (U) The Greek MFA, through its International Organizations department, informed us that in principle they are sympathetic to the U.S. position on the Torres Strait, as they appreciate the precedential value of the Australian action in other international waterways. Our MFA interlocutors told us they would propose that the Greek delegation make an intervention similar in nature to ours, but that it was more likely that they would work through the EU presidency, seeking to strengthen the EU presidency presentation during coordinating sessions.

12. (C) Post has been trying to get the action Ministry, the Ministry of Mercantile Marine, to respond on this Torres Strait issue for weeks, but we have been repeatedly given the run around. If the issue had not moved out of the IMO and into the UNGA, post would likely still not have an answer, thin as it is. On the side, one MFA contact told us that he was stunned to find that the Ministry of Mercantile Marine has never contacted the Greek shipowners in any fashion on our demarche, and has apparently taken no official action on the matter. As a result the MFA was unable to respond effectively to our latest request on short notice for fear that their response will be out of line with the politically powerful ship owners. Note: The entire Ministry of Mercantile Marine was given December 6th off to celebrate St. Nicholas' Day; the patron saint of sailors in the Port of Pireaus. End note.
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